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BANARAS

Guide to

PANCH - KROSI YATRA

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BANARAS

A GUIDE TO PANCH-KROSHI YATRA

By

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Glossary

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This book is respectfully dedicated to the great pujari Bhattacharya Mahashaya who translated Kashi Khandam into Bengali.

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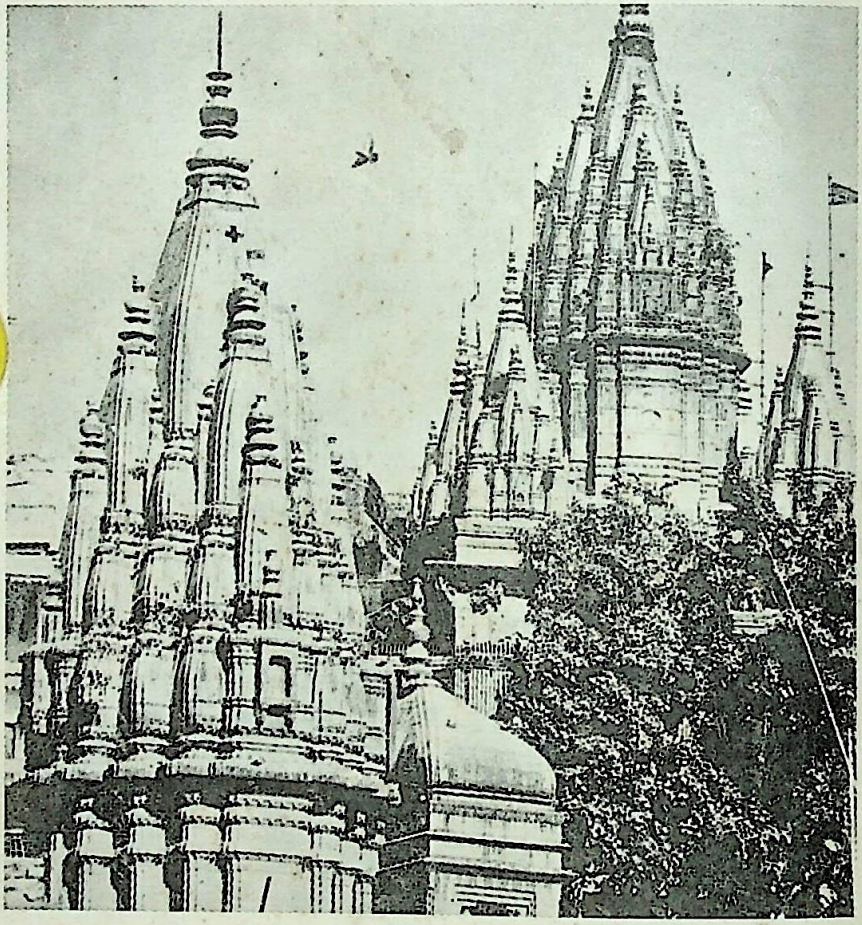

The temple of Manikarnika Ghat

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PREFACE

According to a consensus of all the Sacred Scriptures which relate its origin, Kashi enjoys a twofold unique privilege, that of having been created by the Lord Shiva himself, and that of being the first land that ever emerged from the primeval waters.

Some other *tirthas*, like Amarnath and Uttarkashi, may offer a more highly concentrated and more exclusive centre of spiritual life. Some big cities like Madras or Calcutta may claim a wide range of culture and of erudite knowledge. Some privileged spots like Cape Comorin or Darjeeling may be proud of more impressive natural beauty. But in the heart of every Hindu, the mere name of Kashi calls up a very peculiar feeling, which is neither fear nor desire, neither expectation nor joy, a feeling closely related to the after-life, or better said, to the removal of the need for any individual after-life. In Varanasi, the town between the Varana and the Assi, we are not so much concerned with this life as with the extinction of it, how to wipe out of space and time the physical, intellectual, ethical and psychic entity which we use to call man.

Of all India, and probably even of all the world, Kashi is *the* place *par excellence* where man pours himself into God, just as Ma Ganga, lower down in her course, pours her waters into the boundless ocean. Kashi is the main gate, the widest-open exit out of this life of *samsara*. Beyond it the partition of *nama-rupa*, which separated the part from the whole, vanishes for ever. The "part" may continue in its eternal journeying, but it will no longer be a *jiva*, it will be Shiva. In Varanasi, the Lord Vishnu himself worships the Lord Maheshvara and acknowledges His supreme authority. The multiplicity which Brahma created and which Vishnu perpetuated, Natarajan reunites and merges in His cosmic dance.

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In Kashi, one learns to pass from the one to the other. To die there is supreme bliss, but to live there in such a way as to deserve the coveted death is perhaps a still fuller blessing. There one understands that to die is not merely to leave this bodily frame, but to dissolve all the subtle bonds which make up our whole being. The body will perish anyway, even if we make no effort to abandon it, and that is neither the most difficult nor the most painful process, It is when we try to disintegrate the subtler envelopes that we really put our body to its proper and highest use, and that we actually work. Varanasi is full of human beings who try at last to live, no longer in this world, but in the Lord Vishvanath, the Guru of all gurus.

For that reason, although death is ever roaming in its streets and its ghats, its palaces and its *dharmashalas*, and in the mind of every man and woman, Life also is present. Varanasi is in no way a "city of the dead" ; she brims over with life, vitality and energy—which supply the jumping-board from which to dive into the Divine. It is precisely because she is at the crossroads where a man ceases to be a *jiva* that she corresponds to the *ajna-chakra* between the eye-brows of the yogin, and that she is the "Mystic eye" of India.

It is said that the city and the surrounding countryside, within a ten mile radius (*panch-kroshi*) still rest on the three points of the *trishula* on which it was raised by Sri Vishanath. And although the Lord Shiva and all the other attendant gods had to retreat to the Himalayas during a long period while the holy place was governed by King Divodas, under instructions from Brahma himself, the presence of Shiva can now be felt almost tangibly, or perhaps more than tangibly, in every spot of that vast circle.

That is why the consciencious devotee should not be content with visiting the main temples within the city and bathing in the holy Ganga. He should also obtain the *darshan* of many images and *ishvaras* which, like pearls on a string, mark the different stations of the great Panch-

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koshi pilgrimage. Perhaps the route had been modified in the course of ages, more particularly during and after Moslem invasions, but the present itinerary was marked by white marble slabs—many of which have already disappeared—which give name and number of each according to the Kashi Khandam of the Skanda Purana.

The object of this small guide-book, which was prepared in close co-operation with my wife Hughette Herbert, is to facilitate the task of the pilgrim and to enable him to derive as much benefit and joy as possible from his journey, whether he makes it on foot in six days, in the more orthodox way, or in one or two days with some more rapid means of conveyance.

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THE FIRST DAY (1 to 31)

The pilgrimage begins in the very heart of the holy city, although not immediately with the temple of Lord Vishvanath. The first station is said to have been indicated by a marble plate affixed at the foot of the big ashvattha tree which stands at one corner of the Gyan-bapi platform. In any case, *Gyan-bapi* (No 1), the Well of Knowledge, has the undisputed honour of being the starting-point for the whole of the Panch-kroshi ; and that is only right, because it was the hiding-place which the priests of the former temple chose for the sacred lingam when the temple was destroyed under the orders of Aurangzeb at the end of the 17th century. The well and the octagonal red stone railing which surrounds it are now protected by a roofing which was built over it in 1828 by Maharani Baija Bai of Gwalior. Pilgrims generally throw flowers and small coins on the white cloth which most of the time is spread over the opening, and they also drink a few drops of its water.

Next comes *Dundhi-raj* (No. 2), which is duly identified by the usual marble-plate (Ck 35/28). The deity is no other than Sri Ganesha, whose blessings it is natural to seek before the central figure of Vanarasi can be approached. The Kashi-Rahasya (III, 73) describes him as the beloved child of Bhavani and Shankara and adds that when he is propitiated all three are pleased. Sri Ganesha played a prominent part in the history of Banaras since it was he who finally succeeded in reinstating in it his father, the Lord Maheshvara, after the latter had been exiled from it by King Divodas. After this achievement Sri Ganesha divided himself into 56 parts which are spread all over the panch-kroshi area ; this Dundhi-raj

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however is not one of the 56, several of which will be encountered in the course of the pilgrimage.

We may now enter the Golden Temple, the centre of all religious life, where Lord Vishvanath (No. 3), the Lord of all, is being constantly worshipped by devotees, both during the five daily *pujas* (at 4 a.m., noon, 6, 9 and 10.30 p.m.) and between them. The present temple, of red sandstone, was erected in the 18th century by the famous Rani Ahalya Bai of Indore, to whom Kashi owes so much; the gilt copper plates which cover the main *chura* are a gift of Maharajah Ranjit Singh of Lahore.

The actual Vishvanath or Vishveshvar lingam is enshrined in a rectangular marble *yoni* and *kundam*, and the walls of the *garbham* are largely covered by modern marble slabs bearing a variety of sculptures. Let us mention among them, starting from the entrance : one ten-armed Ganesha, Rama-Sita-Lakshmana and two nagas in the North-West corner ; Sri Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi as well as Ganga and Jamuna standing on the same makara in the North-East corner, four-armed Ma Annapurna, Shankara-Parvati and the late mohant Pandit Mahavir-prasad Tirpad in the South-East corner ; and again Shankara-Parvati, Kala-Bhairava and Rani Ahalya Bai in the South-West.

In two adjoining *mandirs* are to be found respectively Vaikuntheshvar and Dandipanishvar. Shrines of Parvati, Bhoga Annapurna, Satya Narayana and the lingam of Avimukteshvar grace the four corners of the courtyard in the middle of which stands the building which houses the three lingams mentioned previously.

Immediately after getting the of *darshan* Vishvanath, the pilgrim seeks that of God's consort, *Ma Annapurna* (No 4), whose present temple (D 9/1) on the other side of the street, was built by the Peshwas of Poona in the beginning of the 18th century. The Scriptures tell us that Lord Shiva went begging his food all around the three worlds but could get nothing to eat. Sri Lakshmi then advised him to go to the place where the present temple stands and he found that Annapurna had collected there

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all the food in the universe. He ate the meal which as a dutiful wife she cooked for him, and in order to celebrate the event he himself installed on the spot the image of the Goddess, which even now is worshipped ; it is sometimes said that Kashi was also founded on the same occasion.

On a few days every year, on the festival of *Anna Kut* (in the month of October) pilgrims are allowed to see a very special image which is housed on a higher level. Lord Shiva is represented receiving a bowl of rice from his spouse, in the presence of Ma Lakshmi ; all three statues, which are of a fairly large size, are made of pure gold. And it is said that whoever gets their *darshan* is sure never to die of starvation.

In a neighbouring courtyard, which the pilgrim generally visits before the main shrine, are ranged images of Ma Kali, Jagannath with his usual companions, Lakshmi, Shiva receiving Ganga in his hair in the presence of Parvati and of rishi Bhagiratha, Sri Rama with his wife and his three brothers, Radha-Krishna, Hara-Parvati, and, in the entrance corridor, Lord Nrisimha shown between Prahlada and the latter's mother, and finally Sri Hanuman.

The next five stations are all devoted to Sri Ganapati, and most of them are very difficult to find.

Moda Vinayaka (No 5) is a small red sculpture in the corner of a large room situated in a private house (Ck 31/12) where visitors are not particularly welcome.

No identifying plate was allowed on the other private houses where the standing four-handed *Pramoda Vinayaka* without his usual mouse (No 6. in house Ck 31/14), the sitting two-handed *Sumukha Vinayaka* (No 7 in house Ck 34/60) and the sitting four-handed *Durmukha Vinayaka* (No 8 in house Ck 35/8) are reputed to have sought refuge after their respective temples had been destroyed during Muslim invasions.

Although he is signalled by no marble-plate either, *Gananath* (No 9) on the other hand can quite easily be seen if he is, as is claimed, the large size Ganesha who stands by the side of the platform on which Gyan-bapi opens.

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No 10 is *Dandapani*, where a great number of small lingams share the same marble *kundam*, along with a small Ganesha, by the side of the street (Ck 36/10). On the back wall one can see three large statues of black stone, probably Dandapani himself between Chambhrama and Utbhrama.

It is said that *Kala Raja* (No 11) is the mutilated three-headed statue which can be seen near Gananath.

The next three stations are closely connected with the beautiful story of the *mani-karnika*, the ear-jewel. Lord Vishnu had been doing *tapasya* for such a long time and with such fervour that Lord Shiva had to give him his *darshan*. And during the conversation between them, an ear-ring fell from one ear of the God into the tank, which henceforth was able to give *moksha* to all those who come to bathe in its waters.

The tank is the rectangular *Mani-karnika-chakra pushkarini* (No 12), fairly high above the Ganges, in the middle of the Manikarnika Ghat. Flights of fifteen steep steps lead to the bottom, which is connected with the river by a tunnel. A big stone Nandin prevents entry into the latter from the end opening into the *kund*. Above the steps hangs a large bell. The images of three gods, along with 18 lingams, are lined up on the edge of the *kund* nearest to the Ganges.

Marble plate No 13, close to the kund, reads : *Puna Manikarnika Ghat para-snan*, which probably only means that after getting the *darshan* of the *kund* the pilgrim should have his bath on the spot. It is likely that different benefits are drawn from the actual vision of the tank and from the bath.

If we climb up the steep street leading away from the *ghat* and wind our way round a number of houses and courtyards, we finally reach the building (Ck 8/12) which contains *Manikarnikeshvar* (No 14). The lingam is three floors below a sort of balcony, at street-level, from which it can be seen; it is in a red copper *yoni* surrounded by yellow copper plate. Half-way up one may distinguish in the dim light a statue of Gangaji, with Sarasvati to her

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right and Jamunaji to her left. A large bell hangs over the central orifice. A modern railing is adorned with a picture of Sri Krishna playing his flute. In the outside courtyard are half a dozen other shrines and a number of lingams, arranged without any apparent order.

The two following stations are close to each other, below the graceful Nepali temple.

The entrance to the shrine of *Ganga Keshava* (No. 15), in building D 1/68, is strictly forbidden to non-brahmins. A fairly long and narrow flight of steps starting from the terrace before the temple leads to a small square room opening out on the side of the Ganges The lingam in it is said to have been installed by Shankaracharya himself ; it is accompanied by a three-faced image of black stone, witnout a *vahana*.

We must come up the same steps again and go down by others which are quite close by and lead to the river in order to reach, at a lower level, the narrow passage along which we find a few large size statues. The first is black-stone *Lalita Devi* (No 16), the favourite companion of Sri Radha. The next one is Kashi Devi, who seems to ride a wild pig of the kind so commonly encountered in her city. (But the actual temple of Kashi Devi is in another part of the city).

Jarasandeshvar (No 17) is named after the demon of Bhagavatam and Mahabharata fame, king Jarasandha, who was born in two separate sections and whom rakshasi Jara was able to stick together so that he might live. Eighteen times did he lead his armies against Sri Krishna, who finally left it to Bhima to kill him by splitting him again into his two original halves. The presence of a lingam with such connotations was apparently not appreciated by Ma Ganga, who undermined its foundations and made it sink, so that now pilgrims can only throw flowers over the place where it stands, invisible, deep in the holy waters.

Someshvar (No 18) is a black lingam standing in a white marble *yoni* ; around the white marble *kundam* can be seen about fifteen other lingams, and Nandin watching

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them all thoughtfully from an anteroom. At the entrance of the small lane which leads to the temple (D 16/27) a fine statue of Kala Bhairava with his dog Vatuka is worth noticing.

Above the same ghat we also find *Adalbheshvar* (No 19), "he who gives money very freely", a lingam of rough stone which hardly emerges from the ground, although the level of the very small shrine (D 16/21) is lower than that of the street. Three images in the wall attend upon it.

Shulatankeshvar (No 20), on the other hand, is an enormous stone-lingam standing in a square *kundam* right in the middle of the Prayag Ghat. The large temple which houses it is hewn out of the rock and has no front wall. It also contains a multitude of other lingams and statues representing various godheads. In the rainy season the waters of the Ganges fill the whole cave.

The next three stations differ greatly from each other, but they are all to be found within a very small area on the Dashashvamedh Ghat. Going a few steps up the street which leads away from the ghat, one should then turn to the right between crumbling walls to find a very unimpressive and dilapidated-looking house (D 17/111) to which nothing attracts the attention of the passer-by. When admission into it has been gained we find a few very small dark rooms, none of them more than four feet by four, each of which is a temple. One of them contains *Adivaraheshvar* (No 21), the big lingam which commemorates the original Varaha incarnation of Lord Vishnu, when be rescued the earth from Hiranyaksha, the asura who had sunk it back into the primeval waters; five smaller lingams surround it, and from one of the walls adiminutive worn-out red-painted Ganesha watches the scene.

Another room decorated with white and coloured glazed tiles is a temple devoted to Lord Vishnu in the Prayag Triveni. Others contain various anonymous stone lingams.

When we emerge from the rather stifling atmosphere into the open, we are glad to turn to the large square

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building of red stone which in the full light of the sun contains the large *Dashashvamedheshvar* (No 22). The lingam is supposed to have been set up either by King Divodasa or by Lord Brahma himself in token of the ten horse-sacrifices (*ashva-medha*) which the king had managed to perform at the request of the Creator—probably a unique performance in the whole sacred history of Bharata-varsha. A constant stream of people come to pour water on the lingam, thus expressing their gratitude to the pious monarch who was for so long the master and protector of the city. In the same building are also housed images of various goddesses, several of them connected with diverse epidemic diseases Shitala-Mata, Dulari Mata, Khoki Mata

But after that we must again go underground. A narrow winding passage opening opposite that which lead us to Adavaraheshvar now takes to into a dark corridor at the end of which we find, behind a strong railing, *Bandi Devi* (No 23), the Shaivite Goddess who can free prisoners, both those who are physically captive and those who are bound mentally or otherwise. Clothes and flowers are heaped upon her to such an extent that one can hardly distinguish the features of her small statue. Around her, and easier to perceive in the small sanctuary decorated with glazed tiles, some of them with flower-motifs, are a small black-stone Kali Devi to her right, Hanumanji and Sri Ganesha to her left.

Sarveshvar (No 24) is a large and simple lingam in a small temple (D 25/32) down into which narrow stairs lead from the top of the Paure Ghat. A curious small dancing Ganesha and a group of lingams can be seen on the sides of the staircase.

The pilgrimage then takes us to the very important temple (B 6/102) of *Kedareshvar* (No 25), which may be entered either from the ghat bearing the same name or from the street. If we come to the Gauri Kund above the Ganges, we pass through a wide enclosure which contains a variety of images and lingams, and then through an inner ante-room adorned with large black-stone statues of Shankara, Buddha, Ganesha and Durga

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before we finally enter the *garbham* where the central lingam is enshrined. Outside the *garbham* can be seen small statue of Kala-Bhairava and of Chuti Bai, and near the corridor leading to the street, Shri Badri Narayana on one side and Shri Dashavatara on the other, each group guarded by a Nandin.

No marble plate identifies *Hanumadeshvar* (No 26), to be found at the further end of a small street which climbs very steeply the bank above the Hanuman Ghat. In a private house (B 4/42) is found a large courtyard notable for an enormous pipal and an important temple The platform at the foot of the former supports a considerable number of small statues and sculptured slabs, including several nagas. The latter houses a red gigantic statue of Sri Hanuman with his foot on Kalanemi ; before him the ishvara is a very diminutive lingam. About two thirds of the way up the street must be noted a statue of Ruru-Bhairava in front of an enormous lingam, both of them enclosed by a high railing.

The next two stations, near the water-works, in the proximity of the Ganges, are closely connected with the episode in the mythological history of Kashi, where Lord Shiva sent Surya to recover for him the city which was then in the hands of King Divodas. It is said that the Sun-God, also called Arka, failed in his mission, but became so enamoured of the place that he decided to remain there and for that purpose divided himself into twelve parts. Ten of them have become statues which can still be seen in various temples. The other two became tanks which are situated at both ends of the town : Lolarka and Uttararka. It is near the former that we find the big but simple lingam of *Lolarka* (No 27), in a small white-washed and equally simple temple (B 2/32).

Arka Vinayaka (No 28), the Ganesha related to the same story, enjoys one of the most beautiful situations in the whole of Varanasi. His small red temple (B 2/19) and the terrace in front of it dominate the Ganges and her ghats from on high and also offer an extensive view over the opposite bank, Vyasa-Kashi, where rishi Vyasa had wanted to set up a rival Kashi, and which is said to have

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been cursed by Mother Parvati, so that every one who dies there has to be reborn in the body of an ass. But it is also said that the great sage Kabir, at a time when it was thought that he was doomed to die, asked to be carried there, because his ambition was to receive a special and individual blessing from Lord Shiva and he would not be content with the mass liberation automatically granted to all those who die in the real Kashi. Ganesha is represented twice in this temple, once in one of his usual *asanas* and once in a very soldier-like attitude. The statues are red and a single rat services them both.

Leaving the banks of the river, we now turn inland and very soon come across the modern temple (B 1/168) *Assisanghameshvar* (No 29), where the single *kundam* contains three different lingams ; two of them probably stand for the Assi and the Ganges, which actually meet in the immediate vicinity ; the third may correspond to a heavenly stream which has no visible counterpart on this earth, although it may play an important psychic role, perhaps the Sarasvati.

The last two stations of the first day are devoted to Ma Durga. As is proper, the introduction to this particular section of the pilgrimage is offered by Sri Ganesha in his temple of *Durga Vinayaka* (No 30), a small red structure which stands above the bank of the large Durga Kund. The four-armed two-eyed God wears a very prominent brahmanical cord and a crown ; he carries in one of his left hands a lotus, and an unidentified weapon in one of his right hands.

A few steps away is the monumental red sandstone temple of *Durga Devi* (No 31), which was built by Rani Bhavani of Natore. It is now the only one in the city where animals are being sacrificed. All that can be seen of the Goddess is the silver mask which covers her face ; the dome above her and the pillars which support it are also made of silver. The many troublesome monkeys who appear to think that the temple belongs exclusively to them occasionally make the visit more exciting than pleasant or inspiring.

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THE SECOND DAY (32 to 37)

After the first day spent entirely in the sacred city of Kashi, the pilgrim now starts on his long journey in the attractive surrounding countryside.

The road from the great Durga temple and the neighbouring dharamashala, follows on the outside the high stone wall which encircles the vast compound of the Banaras Hindu University ; only two gates in that wall are passed, separated by a distance of several miles.

It is a very long and sometimes fastidious road to tread in clouds of dust although on both sides large trees generously offer their shade to the tired and thirsty pilgrim. The inhabitants of the intermediate villages seem to devote considerable activity to pottery, in addition to the cultivation of cereals in the adjoining fields. Alongside with the buffaloes and bullocks, the overwhelming majority of which are private property, groups of camels are not infrequently met with, carrying loads of hay, firewood or building materials.

Only near the end does a small side-road branch off to the right, about three miles from the University, and leads to the village of Karmajitpur. There is found *Vishvaksheneshvar* (No 32), the god who eats whatever has been left over of the offerings to the deity to whom the sacrifice had been offered ; he is sometimes represented with two arms, carrying a *damaru* and a *trishula*, and escorted by five soldiers, but no image of him can be seen in the village. Around the diminutive yoni-less lingam both the *kundam* and the *mandir*, to which a small portico will be attached, are at present being rebuilt.

The pilgrim should then retrace his steps to the main road and follow it further to the important village of Kandava (or Kandoa). where many of the houses are to be admired for the beautiful painted ornamentation around their entrance doors. There the five following stations are to be found, in the immediate vicinity of the majestic rectangular tank of Kardama Tirtha. Over the latter towers up the proud *chura* of the main *mandir*.

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Crossing a small bridge which runs alongside an artistic portico over the ghat, specially built for the cattle, one reaches the temple, built of red sandstone and kept in excellent repair, in which is enshrined, in a brass *yoni Kardameshvar* (No 33), the low round black-stone lingam erected by Kardama Rishi Bhagavan, the father of the world-famous Kapila Muni. Behind the lingam can be seen a statue of Sri Durga, with her lion on the pedestal, and above one of Sri Ganesha; on the left is one of Hanumanji. The statue of Kardama Rishi is found, in a posture of meditation, in a large closed niche outside the door of the temple. On his right, on the side-wall, is also a statue of Devahuti Mata, Kapila's mother. On the back wall and on the outside is a fine statue the subject of which remains unidentified.

Behind the tall stone-structure are to be found *Kardama kupa* (No 34), the deep round well now protected be a small roofing from which Kardama drew his supply of water, and also three important lingams. The first one, *Somanath* (No 35) is in a small square temple adjoining to which an identical building houses images of Hanumanji and of a standing Lord Nrisimha with Bhakta Prahlada under his right hand. The next, *Virupakashu* (No 36) is a small lingam on the top of a square stone pillar on three sides of which very fine carvings represent Lord Vishnu, Lakshmi and Sitala; the god Virupaksha is generally pictured with two hand, carrying a stick. The last one is *Nilakantha* (No 37) a small lingam in a large square *yoni* which occupies most of the space in a temple between Virupaksha and Somanath On the left can be seen Lord Shiva on Nandin (?), a Devi with a child in her lap, and at the back Sri Ganapati.

The village provides ample accommodation in which to remain overnight.

THE THIRD DAY (38 to 61)

In the course of this day, *darshan* can be obtained of 24 different stations of the Panch-kroshi.

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One and a half miles from Kandava, in the village of Amara, near a well, and hardly distinguishable from the surrounding constructions is the very simple low-roofed shrine of Naganath (No 38), the Lord of *nagas*, a very simple lingam ; on its left another one, smaller, whose name nobody seems to know. And now begins a series of 15 temples which are of particular interest because in each one of them the presiding deity is represented by a fairly large-sized statue, most of the time in high-relief. One mile from Amara is the village of Avahe or Aore where, at a short distance from the road, under a small peaked roof supported by only two walls, can be seen the picture of *Chamunda* (No 39). The image bears a tiger-skin around her lions ; in her two arms she wields a sabre and an axe ; a *rudraksha-mala* hangs from her neck ; she wears ear-rings and a diadem ; the whole sculpture is covered with red paint.

Although within a stone's throw of Chamunda, the next two stations are reputed to be on the territory of the next village, Delhana.

Only one wall supports the roof over *Moksheshwar* (No 40). The Lord of *Moksha*, liberation, is represented by a high lingam in a *yoni* which faces the wall. The ornate building is graced with sculptures representing one of them Mahavir, one other Shiva, Ganesha (?) and Paravati, and a third a standing four-armed Ganesha with a small human figure under his right hand.

Karmeshvar (No 41) represents the Lord of kindness, of mercy. It is housed in a temple which although larger in size than the two preceding ones, is much more simple A few steps lead to the *yoni* containing a very large lingam, which is accompanied by no representative sculpture. Pictorially, both Moksheshvar and Karmeshvar are often showing doing *japa* with a *mala*.

At a total distance of 7 miles from the University, in the village of Dhrina, can be seen the small temple of *Virabhadreshvar* (No 42) the Lord of Virabhadra. The deity has eight forearms, round which *nagas* are playing ; he wields the usual eight attributes of Lord Shiva and wears

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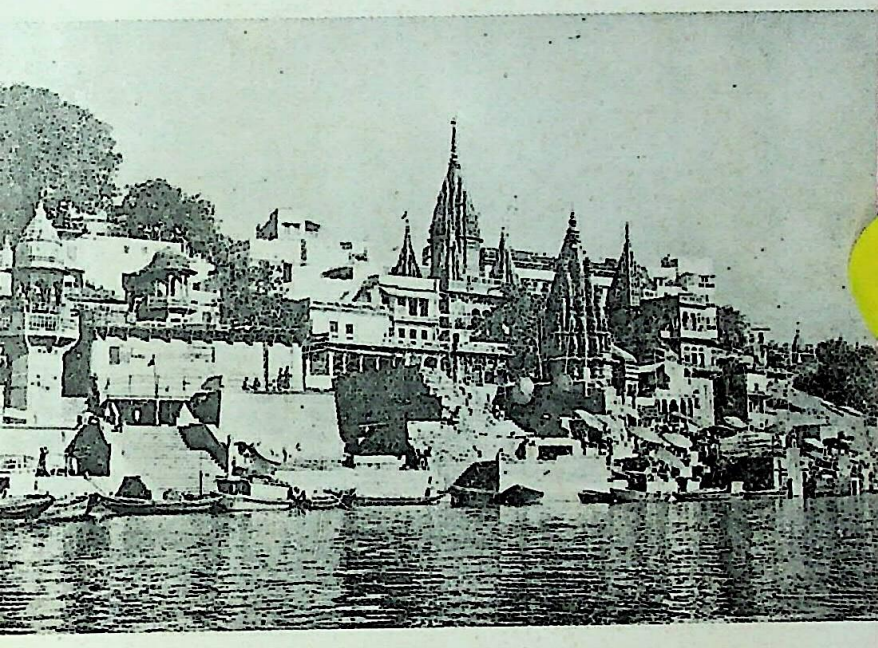
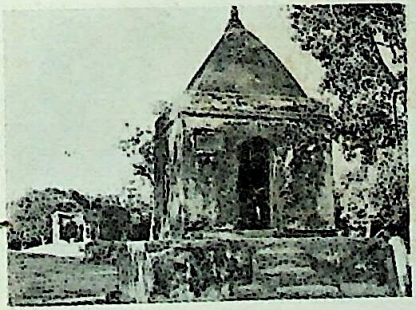
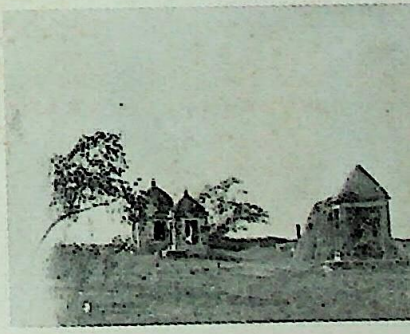


The Manikarnika Ghat

Bhutanatha
(Station No. 66)



Moksheshvar
(Station No. 40)



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Kardameshvar
(back of the main temple)

Vrishabhadhvajeshvar
(Station No. 91)

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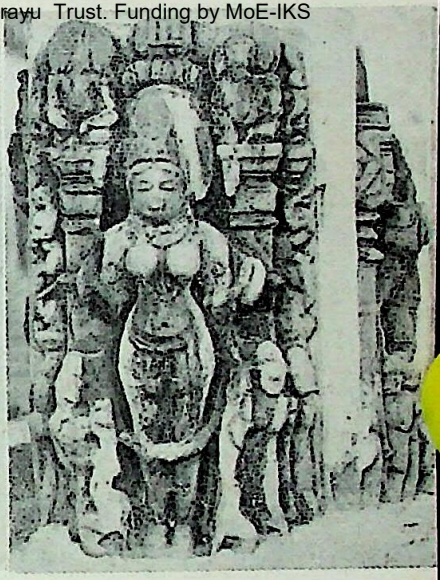
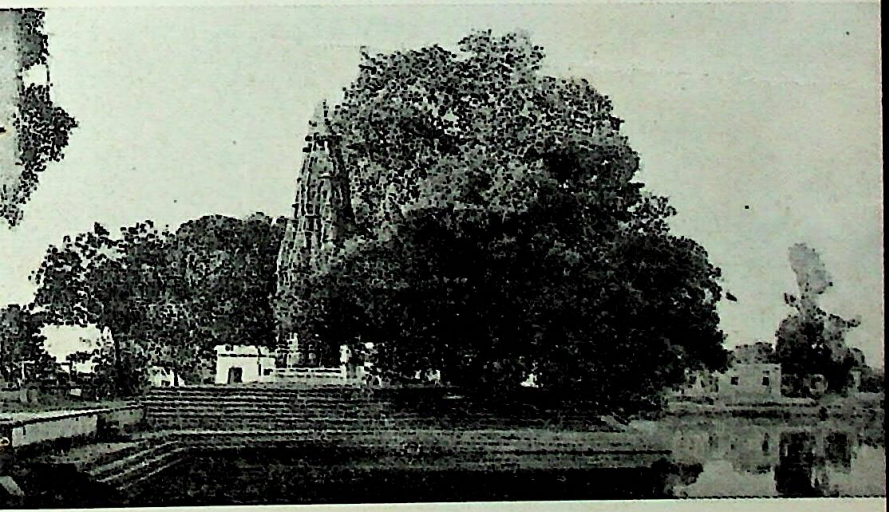
Narakarnava Taraka Gana
(Station No. 58)



Virupakasha (Lakshmi)
(Station No. 36)



Kardameshvar
(Station No. 33)

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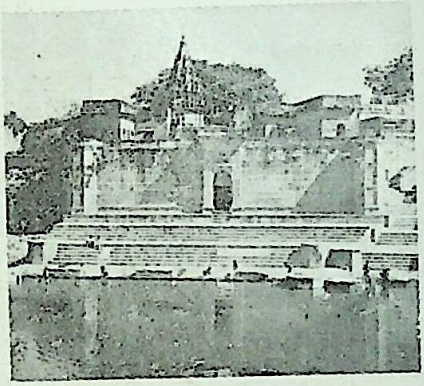

Rameshvar
(Station No. 80)

Kailasa Temple

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a sort of skirt ornamented with leaf or flame designs ; his high *jata* is gracefully inclined.

A little further, in a small temple, in Bandipur, *Vikataksha Durga* (No 43) stands on a shelf above her lion, on the back wall of the *garbham* ornamented with coloured glazed tiles, She wears a four tiered crown and before her is a stone lingam.

In the lovely mud-built village of Kashipura, on the edge of a beautiful tank stands on a raised platform the small square temple with carved out walls, of *Unmata Bhairava* (No 44), one of the eight Bhairavas, the one who transcends the realm of mind. His hair collected in a *jata*, one leg raised in a Natarajan pose, he stands in high relief, wearing large ear-rings and a *rudraksha-mala*. His "madness" is indicated by a streamlet of saliva which runs from his mouth down to his throat ; on his breast he seems to clasp some oval-shaped fruit. The serpent and the peacock feather with which he is often pictured have been omitted.

In the same village, by the roadside, in a similar temple, stands *Nila Gana* (No 45), the blue *gana*, a soldier brandishing a sabre and a shield, his *dhoti* and *chaddar* clapping in the wind, with a crown and a *rudraksha-mala*.

In a similar temple again, a few yards from the road, in the village of Deora, between two small ponds, is *Kalakuta Gana* (No 46), the gana who carries poison, covered with red paint. His hair falls in two plaits on each side of his head. He holds a lily-like *trishula* but not his usual bow, and he also wears *rudrakshas*.

About 400 yards further, near a kund, at the end of a narrow raised path, in a carefully white-washed and well-kept temple is *Vimala Durga* (No 47), painted red, sitting in a sort of *padmasana*. She has ten arms and her eyes are of silver. In a corner of the *mandir* lie some old mutilated sculptures.

A small distance from it, marked by a Kashi-Rahasya stone-slab, is the small two-walled shrine of *Mahadeva* (No 48), where the lingam is encased in a high *yoni*.

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The temple of *Mandikeshva Gana* (No 49), in the village of Matanga, has very much the same appearance and is also signalled by a Kashi-Rahasya slab. But inside there is no lingam. The deity is represented as a warrior with a bull's head, unfortunately damaged, a sword and a shield, his clothes flapping in the wind.

In the village of Gaura can be seen the other "door-keeper" (*dvarapala*) of Lord Shiva, *Bhringiriti Gana* (No 50) or Bhringikesha. In his two-walled shrine, the whiskered warrior, *rudraksha* beads round his neck, also wields shield and sword.

Nearby, but having lost its marble-plate, is the similar structure housing *Ganapriya* (No 51). The god standing under a small dome holds a lily-like *trishula* and a weapon resembling a mace ; he wears ear-rings and a crown. Time however was unkind to him and deprived him of his feet.

Again in the same locality, we also see the almost identical temple of *Virupaksha Gana* (No 52). The god holds the same weapons and carries the likeness so far that the ends of his feet are also lacking. He wears two beads of *rudraksha* and an unusually-shaped crown.

In the village of Matala Devi, we come upon the last of the series of the temples with sculptured images. It is that of *Yaksheshvar* (No 53), where the main structure, with a pointed-roof, is flanked by two smaller flat-roofed buildings. Alongside the presiding deity is a sculpture representing the Goddess who gave her name to the village. Both have *damarus* ; the Goddess wears ear-rings.

Then come four temples without any ornamentation, each of which houses only a lingam in its *yoni*. The first three of them have further been deprived of their identification plates. Soon after the village of Prayagpur rises the two-walled temple of *Vimaleshvar* (No 54) with a big stone lingam in a stone *yoni*. Near milestone No. 10 is the identical temple of *Moksha-dayanarnah* (No. 55) or Mokshadeshvar. About 5 furlongs further one finds the black stone lingam of *Jnanadeshvar* (No. 56) in a very similar building. Very much like the preceding ones is also *Amriteshvar* (No. 57) in the village of Asoari.

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We then come to a large rectangular *kund,* the Gandharva-sagar, in a fairly big village. None of the small temples at its four corners and in its vicinity enjoys the privilege of being mentioned in Holy Scriptures, but it is a beautiful shaded spot where one is tempted to rest after the long walk.

The last stretch of the day takes the pilgrim to the village of Bhima-chandi where the night will be spent, 11½ miles from the University. Within a large compound of temples are found very close to each other four stations of the Panch-kroshi.

Black-faced "terrible" *Bhima Chandi Devi* (No. 58) stands under a brass dome supported by 4 pillars. Near her is a statue of black ten-footed and ten-headed (*dash-mukha*) Kali. Starting from the front wall of her temple is a sort of covered gallery which houses in the particularly interesting statues of Hanumanji and Sri Ganesha ; very near the latter a brass image of a lion stands under a large bell and threateningly shows its teeth.

A nearby *garbham* enshrines four important deiteis. The one to the extreme right, Asura Devi is not mentioned in the Kashi Khandam. But the next one is *Chanda Vinayaka* (No. 59) the "very angry" Ganesha, wearing a crown, who carries an axe in his right hand and also a *lota* and who is accompanied by his faithful rat. In front of his te ple are a lingam and a Nandin.

After him comes *Raviraiaksha Gandharva* (No. 60), the gandharva "with eyes as red as the Sun (Ravi)".

And the last of the series is *Narakarnava Taraka Gana* (No. 61), above whose five heads a stone individual sits in *padmasana,* palms joined in meditation ; he has ten arms, and a lingam stands prominently on his chest. On his left is a small human being whom he seems to be lifting.

Further along to the left stands a good sculpture representing Shiva and Parvati.

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THE FOURTH DAY (62 to 86)

On the morning of the fourth day, the pilgrim walks 1¼ miles, and then crosses a main road, 1½ furlongs after which, near milestone No. 13, he comes to the village of Kachanar. There he finds in a one-wall *mandir* a sculpture representing *Ekapada Gana* (No. 62) standing on one foot, but duly equipped with a complete pair, although his name might have lead to suppose that he has only one. His pose is not unremindful of that often taken by Krishna murali. He holds a mace. Before him stands a stone lingam complete with *yoni* and naga.

We then come to the large agglomeration of Shyusagar, with the beautiful and very large Dauria Ganesh Kund, over which an exceptionally large *nim* spreads its foliage. At the foot of the tree a wide raised platform supports a number of large-sized bells, various sculpture and also an interesting old stone lingam bearing a human face, which the villagers claim to be a Bhairava. But neither that lingam nor any other sculpture or temple on the banks of the tank can claim to form one of the stations at which the pilgrims are expected to stop, except, a little further, *Mahabhima Gana* (No. 63) sculptured on a stone slab in a one-walled temple. The deity swings an elephant, which is probably an asura in disguise, and further seems to be holding a triple mace. A lingam and a *yoni*, as well as the accompanying Nandin, are in evidence before him.

The real *Bhairava* (No. 64) of the Kashi Khandam shares with his *Bhairavi* (No. 65) one temple in the seemingly prosperous village of Harsos, (or Harapur) at quite a respectable distance from the main road which should be left at milestone No. 15. It is said that formerly the Panch-kroshi road drove through the heart of the agglomeration, but that for reasons unknown or long forgotten, it was displaced and now by-passes it. The main occupations of the villagers seems to be spinning, weaving and dyeing. A big well stands alongside the white-washed temple on a very high and wide rectangular platform in the middle of the village.

Bhairava is represented standing, sexed, with stick and

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trishula, accompanied by his faithful dog. Nearby four-armed Bhairavi has remarkable ear-rings. In a corner of the *garbham* is a large monolithic *ekamukho*-lingam on a pedestal, and over it hangs a bell.

After leaving Harsos, we follow the main road, near which we can see a number of small temple , most of them in a dilapidated condition, and offering no special interest. Finally, in Dinadayalpur, we find close to each other three such temples which have retained their lingams. The one nearest to the arriving pilgrim has a pointed roof ; it is that of *Bhuthanatha* (No. 66), the Lord of the *bhutos*. The very small lingam is accompanied by another still smaller ; a small and very worn-out Nandin faces them. In the furthest away of those three temples, is a very large lingam on which crawls a naga.

We are now very near the village of Dindaspur, in which we find the *Sindhurodasi* (No. 67) a fairly large tank with few ghats surrounded by many tall trees. A number of small temples have been built between it and the road. In one of them, behind the usual lingam, a Mahabhima brandishes both elephant and mace. While in another, the image of which, alleged to be Brahma, raises two arms as if to bless, both sides of the door bear interesting sculptures representing the ten main *avataras* of Sri Vishnu ; over them are the sun to the right and the moon to the left.

Then follows a stretch through barren country where we find at more or less regular intervals small monotonously similar brick-temples, each of which contains a *yoni* and a lingam, sometimes raised above ground level. but with no sculpture. They are *Kalanatheshvar* (No. 68) opposite milestone 16, and *Kapardishvar* (No. 69) named after the God whose heir is tied up in a chignon (kapardin), both of them in the village of Janasa, then *Kameshvar* (No. 70) and finally, after crossing the railway-line, *Ganeshvar* (No. 71) in the village of Chaukandi.

We now come to the village of Chaukhandi which owns two Panch-kroshi stations : *Virabhadra Gana* (No. 72) where the deity the virile and brave gana, holds

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a mace and lily-shaped *trishula* ; *Charumukha Gana* (No. 73) the fair-faccd one, who also has the same attributes and further wears a crown *Gananath* (No. 74) the Lord of ganas, is only marked by a lingam in a two-walled temple in the neighbouring village of Vodouli.

The next and very important station is that of *Dehali-Vinayak* (No. 75), the Ganapati who guards the entrance to the whole sacred 10-mile-radius region of Panch-kroshi, in the village of Deuria. Before railway-lines had been laid down, he was the first deity whom the incoming traveller was normally expected to salute, the last one from whom the departing one was to take leave. And although now he only partly fulfils his original function, he still retains considerable prestige and it must be admitted that his temple and its immediate surroundings still make a deep impression on the pilgrim, as well as on the visitors coming for different purposes.

The red-stone peak-roofed temple is only about 9 feet by 9, but it stands near a large tank and is surrounded by various other temples, statues and lingams, some of them very old and worn-out, others brand new as a testimony of the devotion with which the god has never ceased to be worshipped. One of the most obvious is a large *ekamukha* lingam painted red, with hair and a silver crescent.

The statue of Dehali-Vinayaka is placed under a dome which is supported by the back-wall and two pillars. He has four arms and wears a crown, but shows no sign of a third eye ; he is painted bright-red and stands on his rat which is painted white. To his right is a small red Ganesha. To his left a silver-painted image of Lord Nrisimha, with a cat's head and Bhakta Prahlada, and further along 7 lingams. Further along the wall, a small statue of Gauri painted green.

Of the neighbouring sanctuaries, one is consecrated to Sitala, represented with a copper masque, and another to Sri Hanuman—

On one of the side-walls of the main temple can be seen the *sixteen Ganesha* (No. 76) painted red, in two rows of eight. Nothing distinguishes them from each other but

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some texts give them individual names. One such list (in **Shri Kashi Dhyan Mala**) is the following: Ugra Vighna Vinayaka, Vakt Nam Mayadatrenam, Ram Marga Prabodhkaya, Papi Shastre, Vighna Vinayaka, Tapovana Vinayaka, Sita Rajnakaya, Ayu Katre, Rogahatre Nidhidatre, Dvijatdhipaya, Tuhilaya Vinayaka, Ganeshaya, Vishvaraksha Vinayaka, Gananath and Ganapriya. Before the wall where they are pictured stands an oval lingam in its *yoni*.

It is somewhat of an anti-climax to continue with Uddanda Ganesha (No. 77) a roughly-hewn two-armed image covered with red paint and hardly more recognisable than his rat. And the raised stick with which he is requested to mete out punishments is not at all visible. The marble-plate has disappeared, but a Kashi-Rahasya slab still identifies the temple, which has an anteroom.

The big *yoni*-less lingam of *Utakaleshvar* (No. 78) deserves no further description.

On the other hand, in the modest village of Hirampur the temple of *Rudrani Tapabhumi* (No. 79) will well repay careful examination. The lingam and *yoni* standing on a square, flat-stone, are surrounded by a variety of sculptures, some of which rather unusual. Let us only mention the following: one image of Lord Vishnu, inscribed "Sopreshvara" on the pedestal, holding Lord Nrisimha on his mace, one small Kala Bhairava, one four-armed red Ganesha standing with his rat on his left, a red Hanumanji, Rudrani herself in the likeness of a Kala Bhairava with her pointed front chignon and lily-shaped *trishula* in hand and accompanied by Nandin, a group of Rama-Sita-Lakshmana in black stone and, to end up the list, a tiny Ganesha in a remote corner of the shrine.

The next seven stations of the Panch-kroshi are all to be found within the large compound of the Rameshvaram Temple, which towers high above the banks of the river Baruna, and where all the main heroes of the Ramayana are represented. The temple contains a great number of small buildings, each of which houses one or more lingams, and many others are either entirely in the open or merely

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covered over by some sort of roofing. Some of those lingams present a rather exceptional appearance which may have had an esoteric meaning, even if the latter has long been forgotten. Thus one of them is attended by two Nandins, in directions perpendicular to each other ; another one and its *yoni* stand on a large flat stone in the shape of an equilateral triangle ; two twin *yonis* complete with their respective lingams have thier smaller ones between them etc. But let us come to those identifiable by name and number and the form of which is not so unusual

The chief deity is naturally *Rameshvar* (No. 80) which is honoured by a large regular temple. On the threshold of the entrance door to the shrine, on each side of a lingam, can be seen two large-size statues of Haha and Huhu which in that position often guard Shaivite temples. The central lingam is remarkably thin, less than 2 inches in diameter and proportionately low, but it stands in a large brass *yoni*, itself contained in a still larger brass kund. A red Kala Bhairava guards it on the right and Hanuman on the left.

Someshvar (No. 81) is a plain lingam which only the marble-plate distinguishes from the other. Arranged in one line, the *Bharateshvar* (No. 82), *Dhyarabhumeshvar* (No. 85) and *Nabusheshvar* (No. 86), lingams are covered by the same oblong roof which also protects one additional anonymous smaller lingam and a Nandin. *Lakshmaneshvar* (No 83) and *Satrughneshvar* (No. 84) both offer that peculiarity of being supported by three concentric *yanis*. The latter is placed at the end of a building in which can be seen, side be side, large-sized stone image of a six-armed Shiva (Dattatreya), Lakshmana, Rama, Sita, a red Hanuman, a red Ganesha, Nrisimha, Kala-Bhairava, and on the side-wall Surya in his chariot, Narayana and Hanuman.

Other sancturies are devoted to Sita-Rama-Lakshmana, to Durga-Parvati, to Radha-Krishna and to Shri Yugaladasji.

The visit of this otherwise extremely interesting temple is rendered most unpleasant by a variety of people who

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insistently clamour for money under the most unexpected pretexts or with no pretext at all. The night must however be spent in the locality.

THE FIFTH DAY (87 to 91)

Coming down from Rameshvar, the pilgrim will probably have a bath in the clear waters of the river Baruna, from the excellent ghat which spreads below the temple walls. He will then cross the river and find immediately afterwards, a few yards from the road and in the open country, the small temple of *Asankhyatatirtha-lingam* (No. 87) a *yoni-lingam* standing on a platform over which a roof is supported by four pillars.

The next station is to be found somewhat further, near a kund about 5 to 6 furlongs from the road, in the pretty village of Karuna, opposite milestone 24. It is *Devasangheshvar* (No. 88), where the temple contains as is normal for a place where several gods gather, as the very name indicates—a number of different lingams, most of them on an oblong flat stone ; two *yonis* contain two lingams each and three diminutive Nandins at end the meeting. It is possible that each one of the participants may correspond to a particular aspect of the Godhead and that the whole concourse should have a deep esoteric and yogic significance, but nobody seems to be aware of it.

In the village of Shivpur, the pilgrim should not omit to see an important temple devoted to the five Pandava, although it does not actually form part of the Panchkroshi. On the right hand side of the road, a gate leads into a fairly large courtyard over-shadowed by a beautiful *nim* tree. To the left of the entrance are remarkable statues of Chinmasta (one of the finest in and around Banaras) and one of Bagala ; to the right is an image of Hanumanji, the five heroes (Yudhisthira, Bhima Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva) and also their wife Draupadi in large slabs ranged side by side against the wall. In the adjoining shrine, the Pandava are further represented by a row of five brass-circled lingams of decreasing size

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faced by five Nandin of equally decreasing stature, the whole being included in the same elongated kundam. Around them, against the wall and facing them are : Sri Ganesha, Lord Vishnu and Devarshi Narada, the last two in black stone. Further, a statue of Kala Bhairava proclaims that the five brothers gained lawful admittance into Kashi.

We now have to walk a very long way ; several villages are passed, including Vogivil (which boasts of a civil and criminal court), Sadarbajar, and Tandisarak. Finally, near the Hotel de Paris, in Banaras Cantonment, we come upon a small modern-looking but very harmonious temple in which resides *Panchpani Ganesha* (No. 89). One peculiarity of the structure is that on the outside of the back-wall, back to back with Sri Ganesha, is a sculpture representing Sri Krishna in a tree, with two bulls in adoration.

Returning to the Panch-kroshi Road, we reach the village of Khaguri, seven furlongs after milestone No. 31. There we find *Pritheshvar* (No. 90), sometimes called Prithvishvar. The lingam is enclosed in a kundam of white stone. On the left is an image of Sri Ganesha, and on the right one of Parvati. South of the temple is a remarkable Ashtabhuja Durga with her 8-arms. Hanumanji and Annapurna stand near a tamarind tree. It is said in the Kashi-Rahasyam (X, 55) that this place is Svarga-bhumi, a land (bhumi) where paradise (svarga) can easily be reached because there rishi Prithu celebrated a horse-sacrifice (ashwamedha)—while Kashi itself is moksha-bhumi, the land where it is easy to obtain final liberation (moksha). It is also sometimes termed yoga-bhumi on account of rishi Prithu's great *tapasya* at this holy spot.

Some Scriptures however list as No. 90 the vast tank of *Kapilatirtha* (which is reached after traversing the village of Kapildhara), rich in dilapidated temples. On and above the ghats leading to the kund are found a number of small and big temples containing a variety of shrines and images. They include a statue of rishi Kapila himself and of Prajapati Daksha, represented with the ram's head bestowed on him by Lord Shiva after his own had been

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burnt in the fire of the sacrifice ; a yogin in *padmasana* is sitting near him. We can also see two very beautiful large images of Sri Ganesha, one four-armed in a sitting position and one eight-armed, dancing. One of these two is Rajputra Vinayaka. Notable also is a large flat square stone *yoni* in which are placed 42 smaller ones complete with their respective lingams. A gigantic banyan-tree offers its shade, but *pandas* have also spread many sheets of corrugated iron roofs over the platforms where they usually operate.

The main structure however is the red stone temple of *Vrishabhadvajeshvar* (No. 91). Haha and Huhu mount guard on the threshold, on either side of a lingam. Ganesha is represented on the left of the entrance, Hanuman and a lingam on the left. Outside, a Nandin raised on a platform of glazed tiles, faces the door. The main lingam itself, a large reddish stone, is enshrined in an octogonal brass kund.

THE SIXTH DAY (92 to the end)

It is a long morning-walk which takes us to *Jvala-nrisimha* (No. 92) about one furlong after milestone 36. In the small temple isolated among wheat-fields, the presiding deity, the "burning" Nrisimha, stands behind the usual lingam and *yoni*. His lion-head is not very recognisable, nor the small Prahlada below his left hand ; the two V-shaped lines behind him probably represent the split column out of which he marched forth.

A further long walk leads us back to the Ganges, which we had not seen since we left Assi and its temples. We reach it this time at the impressive and beautiful temple of Adikeshava near its confluent with the river Baruna. In the complex building can be found many shrines, the most important of which is of course that of *Adikeshava* (No. 93) himself. The God is represented with a black face, in contradistinction to the similar but white-faced image of Jnana-keshava which occupies an exactly parallel shrine.

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In the same building as Adikeshava, but on a lower level, can also be seen the shrine of *Sangameshvar* (No. 94) which celebrates the meeting of Ganga and Baruna. A large size lingam in a deep rectangular kund stands in a red temple opening on a small courtyard, near which one may also notice an interesting four faced (*chatur-mukha*) lingam as well as two long thin nagas climbing on either side of a door.

A beautiful panchavati clump of trees stand near the place where the Baruna actually joins Ma Ganga.

As we come back into the town of Kashi, confusion sets in anew and it is again difficult to follow the stations of the Panch-kroshi in their proper order, or even to identify them.

No. 95 might be *Karba Vinayaka*, a four-armed Ganesha sheltered by a dome in a pretty little temple above the bank of the Ganges. His rat stands outside the temple in a Nandin-like attitude, but he has a Nrisimha to his right and an unidentified Devi to his left.

To find *Prahladeshvar* (No. 96) we must go all the way to the Prahlad-Ghat. The fact that the great *bhakta's* father on various occasions attempted to have him drowned, and failed, may not be entirely unconnected with the annual invasion of the cave-like temple (A 10/40) by the waters of the Ganges, which then entirely submerge the lingam but soon after again set it free unharmed.

The same vicissitudes do not attend the life of *Trilochaneshvar* (No. 97) which is quite safe, high as it is on the Trilochana Ghat. It is represented by a lingam rather larger than the Vishvanath, in a silver kund which can well stand comparison with that of the latter. A large red temple (A2/40) protects it along with many other images and symbols, and a constant stream of people bring to it holy offerings, more particularly Ganges water and flowers.

It is more difficult to discover *Bindu Madhava* (No. 98). A narrow street, partly made of stone steps, has to be climbed over a long distance from the Panchganga-Ghat, but the visitor is well repaid for his efforts. On the top-

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floor of a house kept in excellent repair is an elaborate temple at the further of which the image can be seen : black-faced Madhava and a very small Lakshmi to his left both stand under a silver dais. To his right is another group of Lakshmi-Narayana, but this time in silver, and in which the Goddess sits on the lap of her Lord. Further still on the same side, against a side-wall, stands a black Garuda. But that is not all. While on the left hand side of the worshipper who faces the images a series of windows open on the Ganges, on the other the temple which is adorned with several columns and a row of 10 bells, opens into the smaller sanctuary of Panchgangeshvar ; the lingam, which is covered over with red copper, is in an octogonal marble *kundam* and on the wall stands a four-armed statue of Gangaji, without her usual *vahana*, having before her a row of five lingams In opposite corners can also be seen two Nandin, one larger than the other, and a smaller lingam. Another continuous room of the same size, opening onto a side corridor, contains a white marble statue of Ekadeshi Devi, and also three small images which probably represent Sita, Rama and Lakshmana.

The next two stations are both situated in the same house (K 24/34) which opens on a small lane above the Balaji Ghat. A few steps lead down into a corridor which one high step and a few columns separate from another passage. In the central *garbham, Gavasteshvar* (No. 99) commemorates the *tapasaya* undertaken by Surya to obtain the help of Mangala Gauri. It is a lingam encased with its yoni in a brass rectangular kundam, with an attending Nandin. Around the room can be seen many other interesting images, the chief of which are, from left to right : Mintar Vinayaka, which is said to be one of the 56, Srimati Kumari Devi, another Ganesha, Lord Shiva with a small Shakti (?) sitting on his lap, Parvati. still another Ganesha, an enormous brass *trishula*, Mayuka Aditya, which is one of the 12 Surya Narayana in Kashi, and below him Dhutapapa. In the adjoining corridors can also be admired and worshipped two statues of Hanumanji at opposite corners and a black Adikeshava.

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And in an adjoining oblong temple, separated from the larger one only by a few columns, under a brass dome, stands *Mangala Gauri* herself (No. 100), a black-faced white-eyed statue about three feet high, which is constantly being visited by women devotees.

The next two share a small room in a temple (Ck7/162) above the Scindhia-Ghat, but it is difficult to obtain their *darshan* because the gate of the building is most of the time closed and they cannot be seen from the outside ; furthermore the *garbham* is very dark and separated from the street by another room where a dozen lingams can be seen. They are *Vashishteshvar* (No. 101) and *Vamadeshvar* (No. 102), whose two lingams in a single rectangular *kundam* commemorate the two great rishis to whom we owe some of the most beautiful hymns in the Rig-Veda Samhita. At the opposite corner of the small square on which the temple opens can be seen Senapati Vinayaka and four other Ganesha.

In the same neighbourhood, still above the Scindhia Ghat (Ck 7/15) overlooking the Ganges from on high, in a sort of wide loggia into which sunlight freely flows, we find *Parvateshvar* (No. 103) a large lingam surrounded by four pillars which a low stone wall connect together. Nandin attends as usual, and a row of other large-size lingams face the back-wall.

Up stream from Manikarnika-Ghat, very near the river, lost between the wooden platforms of the *pandas* can be found the very simple *Maheshvar* (No. 104), a large lingam without a *yoni* in a square *kundam*. Part of its top has been cut off, which is probably not accidental ; however nobody seems to understand the symbol which that peculiarity embodies.

The street above the Manikarnika-Ghat is remarkable for the numerous statues of Ganesha which can be seen on either side. If we follow it, we find a small temple (Ck 9/24) raised high above the street level which contains three-eyed *Siddhi Vinayaka* (No. 105) between his two *shaktis*, *Riddhi and Siddhi* under a silver dais. A diminutive rat and several lingams keep him company.

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Further along, in a high red temple with a proud *chura* can be seen two-eyed *Saptavarna Vinayaka* (No. 106). The inside of the temple is remarkably empty as compared with most of the others ; the God even had to dispense with his rat. But his sanctuary is apparently the last place in which an identifying marble-plate can be found.

There seems to be general agreement that the total number of stations is 108 and therefore that there are two more. What and where they are is a matter of conjecture or better said a controversial question. Some hold that they are the two rivers : (visible) Ganga and (invisible to our bodily eye) Sarasvati. Others maintain that they are Manikarnika and Vishvanath, as stated in the Kashi-Rahasya, or Annapurna and Vishvanath with which the pilgrimage should normally end although they were visited previously.

But perhaps there is a deeper reason for that striking uncertainty. The pilgrim may be allowed to imagine that after he has obtained within a very few days the *darshan* of so many holy places and powerful images he would do well to turn inside, as all yogas teach, and to find within himself that eternal and basic quality of God and man, Nara and Narayana, Shiva and Kundalini, bhakta and ishta-devata, the perfect union between which will secure for him that final liberation, moksha, which the Lord of Kashi so lavishly bestows on His guests.

THE END

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GLOSSARY

Asvamedha. Horse sacrifice performed by Kings to ensure welfare of the realm.

Asura. Mythological demon.

Avatar. Descent or incarnation of the gods.

Bhairava. Devotion to a deity.

Bhutas. Evil spirits.

Chura. Spire of a temple.

Damuru. A type of kettle-drum; one of the symbols of Siva.

Darshan. Blessing.

Devi. Consort of Siva in her benevolent form.

Dhoti. A skirt.

Dvarapala. Door guardian.

Ganas. A group of demigods attending on Siva; usually represented as obese dwarfs.

Gandharvas. Divinities of the sky and air; the musicians of the gods

Garbham. Sanctuary, inner room of a temple.

Hanuman. The celebrated monkey chief who assisted Rama in his war against Ravana.

Isvar. Supreme deity.

Kundam. Sunken base of a lingam.

Lingam. Phallic emblem of Siva.

Lota. Brahmin water pot

Mahswara. The greater Lord; a name of Siva.

Moksha. Release from worldly existence, salvation.

Mandir. A temple.

Mandapa, Hall in front of a temple.

Nagas. Mythical serpent gods.

Nandin. The bull of Siva and chief of the ganas.

Puja. Ritual of devotional service

Padmasana. Lotus throne.

Rakshasas. Earth spirits.

Trisula. Trident emblem of Siva.

Yoni. Stone stand holding a lingam.

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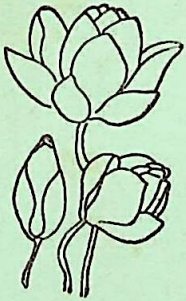

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